



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

11149 US Hwy 16
Building B12
Custer, SD 57730
605-673-8300 phone
605-673-8397 fax

Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

Release Date: **October 7, 2014**

For Immediate Release

Contact: **Bradley Block / Chief of Interpretation / bradley_block@nps.gov**

Jewel Cave Conducts Prescription Burn to Reduce Debris from Jasper Fire

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT, S.D. – Jewel Cave National Monument plans to conduct a prescription fire by mid-October in the Hell Canyon area within the monument. The primary goal of this project is to reduce heavy dead and down fuel accumulations while encouraging native grass and forb production. The area being managed is entirely within the Jasper Fire landscape, which burned in August 2000 and left behind considerable debris.

Acting Superintendent Mike Wiles states, “The Canyons Burn will be an interagency project. The National Park Service and US Forest Service are cooperating to apply prescribed fire to 200 acres of NPS land and 74 acres of adjacent land within the Black Hills National Forest. Because of the location of roads and cliff lines, burning both areas together greatly simplifies the logistics, reduces unwanted impacts, and allows for a more manageable and safer burn.”

There are several standing trees in the proposed burn area. However, the majority of fuels consist mostly of downed trees that resulted from the Jasper fire, which now present a fire hazard of their own. The prescription fire will consume the left-over debris, decreasing the risk of future fires. It will also increase the health of the remaining vegetation and improve aesthetic qualities, but is not designed to target specific wildlife habitat.

During the prescription fire, the three-mile Canyons Trail within the monument will be closed. It will remain closed until the Hell Canyon area is secured and safe for recreational use. The Jewel Cave Historic Area and historic cave entrance are already closed for the season and will remain closed during the prescription fire. There are no plans to close Highway 16 within the monument, but traffic control measures will be in place should a pilot car situation be required. Smoke may be visible around the monument, as well as along Highway 16. Motorists are advised to use caution when traveling through the area.

Wiles further comments, “We realize that the fall season is a great time to take part in outdoor recreational opportunities in the Black Hills and will do our best to open the Canyons Trail as quickly as possible and return to normal operations.”

For more information, visitors are encouraged to call the monument at 605-673-8300 and speak with a park ranger. The monument is currently open seven days each week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MT.

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.